resources. At Kullu Airport, apron and taxiway have been completed by AAI and other works such as Terminal building etc. are at various stages of execution. The State Government of H.P. has further demanded extension of runway at Kullu Airport for which additional land is required after retraining and reclaimation of land from river Bias. AAI has already commissioned a feasibility in this regard by IIT, Roorkee at the cost of approx. Rs. 9.75 lakhs.

Operational airports in the country

*114. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of spending Rs. 420 crore on maintenance and upgradation of airports in 2002-03 alone, only 63 out of 96 airports owned by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) are fully operational;

(b) whether it is also a fact that no efforts have been made by Government to operationalise 33 airports as it requires estimated investment of Rs. 1,200 crore; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the action proposed thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Expenditure on upgradation and maintenance of airports during 2002-03 were Rs. 445.66 crore and Rs. 138 crore respectively. However, 33 airports were non-operational during the year due to non-availability of flights on account of absence of traffic demand.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Operationalisation of non-operational airports depends on prospect of regular flights operations at these airports. In the absence of any demand for flight operaions, it is not viable to operationalise these airports.

Modifications in River Linking Policy

*115. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Maharashtra, through a resolution adopted by Maharashtra Legislaive Assembly, has sought certain changes and modifications in the river linking policy of the Central Government;

(b) if so, the details of the Assembly Resolution and the demands made therein; and

(c) the Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCE (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The resolution of Maharashtra Assembly demand that the State of Maharashtra be given equitable benefits by making necessary technical changes in the proposed national project for interlinking of river, to bring the waters of northern rivers into the deficit basins of Godavari, Krishna, Bhima and Tapi in Maharashtra, by means of tunnels of lift across the Vindhya Mountains. Financial provisions be made by the Central Government to the tune of 10% of the cost of Rs. 5,60,000 crore or the increased cost that may be updated in future, of national river linking project for irrigation development in State taking into account the water requirement of the State. The resolution further resolved that the Central Government be requested to take into account the strong feelings of the members of this house regarding injustice to the State of Maharashtra in distribution of water and give a concrete assurance in this regard immediately.

(c) The Central Government envisages a comprehensive review of the feasibility of linking of the rivers of the country in a fully consultative manner.

Task Force Constituted on 13th December, 2002

†*116. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received the report of the Task Force which was constituted on 13th December, 2002 for the study of the scheme of transfer of water from surplus too water deficits areas and to connect Peninsular rivers with the rivers flowing from the Himalayas for the optimum use of water resources;

(b) if so, the outline thereof; and

(c) if the reply to part (a) above be in the negative by when it is likely to be received and the number of meetings of the task force held, so far?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.